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NRO REVIEW COMPLETED

COR - 0699

8 December 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR : Acting Chief, DPD



SUBJECT : Development Branch Activity Report 30 Nov. - 4 Dec. 1959

1. CORONA and ARGON:

The CORONA and ARGON monthly meetings occurred on 2 and 3 December, respectively. The next CORONA launch will not be made prior to 12 January 1960. The interim will be used to continue detailed tests and studies.

2. OXCART:

Routine activities.

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3.

4.

5. CHALICE:

[redacted] held a CHALICE meeting with Colonel Burke and [redacted] to discuss cooling of fuel prior to refueling for U-2 mission. [redacted] will investigate methods for cooling 1,500 gallons of fuel from 100 degrees F to 0 degrees F in 24 hours.

6. Other:

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DC/DB/DPD-DD/P:PARANGOSKY: [redacted]

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SIGNED

JOHN PARANGOSKY

Deputy Chief, Development Branch  
DPD-DD/P

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6. CORONA AND ARGON MEETINGS - The CORONA and ARGON meetings were held November 30th. Mr. Bissell reported that BMD initially painted an alarming financial picture, but, happily, their report was excessive and that there was little likelihood of the '59-'60 flights being curtailed. However, savings are indicated and in order to save money a decision has been made to close down the Annette tracking station. No CORONA shot will be attempted in December. An attempt will be made to launch one as early as possible in January with camera. It was further revealed at the meeting that we now have flights scheduled to virtually use up all the launch pad

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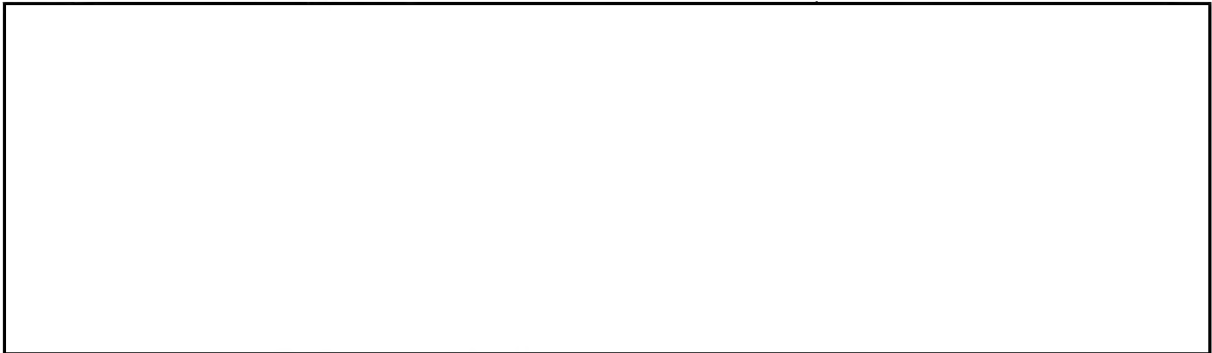
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space through October 1960. Future launches will include cameras to determine if malfunctions can be corrected. An all-out R & D program on the cameras is indicated, otherwise, there will be little use in continuing the program. While no firm schedule has been drawn, two launches a month are anticipated. There are to be no ARGON shots before June, after which there should be one ARGON and one CORONA shot a month during the summer.

On 15 December a meeting will be held in Dr. York's office to review CORONA, SAMOS and MIDAS. In this connection, Mr. Bissell summarized the thinking of Dr. Billings to the effect that drastic major cuts should be made in ground handling equipment at this time. The reasoning behind this is that this is an R & D phase insofar as the vehicles are concerned, and, until we actually have the product of the flight in hand, we do not know what intelligence data we will get. The greatest effort on the read-out equipment should take place when the vehicle becomes operational, not during the R & D phase, since the cost becomes tremendous as a continuing operation.

Mr. Bissell further commented that one point of discussion is the proposal to launch five satellites per month to provide a continuing source of information. He commented that in view of our experience with the weather factor he would favor launch, when required, for, say, a five-day orbit period. His final comment on space activity was a warning that we could not give top priority to CORONA, etc., simply because we have part in it and that at all times we should take an objective view in assessing capability.

7. OTHER ITEMS



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(c) Mr. Bissell announced that he had also received from the Director approval of DPD operation program for the year and approval for OXCART. Approval has been granted for materiel, administrative and operational aspects of the CHALICE program. Left uncovered are CHALICE development program, project operational phase and the [redacted] procurement. Mr. Bissell asked for a write-up of the CHALICE developments, even those in the realm of possibilities. The outlook for [redacted] procurement at this time is poor, but he is interested in what the ultimate proposal should be.

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25X1 Mr. Bissell requested that he receive notification before any new contracts are signed on OKCART. He suggested that a brief memo be attached to [ ] Weekly Status Report and that commitment of funds be held up until Mr. Bissell approves in each instance.

25X1 [ ] raised the question of delegation of authority to himself covering not only programs contained in specific approvals but also authority to obligate funds based on over-all approval of a program. Mr. Bissell stated that a paper on this subject would be forwarded to [ ] this week.

25X1 Mr. Bissell expressed himself as being pleased with the gradual evolution of a good procedure relative to budgeting our program approvals. His intent in urging the present procedure is to serve a double purpose:

(1) To present a brief of the entire Divisional budget program and;

(2) To present for approval specific sections such as CHALICE development, CHALICE operations, etc.

This has the effect of asking for DCI approval of a general program and firm approval of certain pieces. Action on it by the DCI signifies awareness of the whole budget but makes clear that projects not listed will be sent up separately.

25X1 In commenting on the budget, the DD/P stated that he will expect DPD to draft an operational program to be submitted in March for the FY '61 budget. This in turn will be submitted to the DCI before the start of FY '61. Mr. Bissell proposed that in preparing an operational program, specific parts such as CORONA, ARGON, [ ] OKCART, etc., (going programs) be prepared for the DCI in the same package. 25X1

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